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U.S. Reports On Soviets' Latin Actions

Area 'Boiling,' Gromyko Is Quoted

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Soviet military aid to Cuba and Nicaragua since 1979 has been greater than U.S. military aid to all of Latin America in that period, according to a Reagan administration position paper released yesterday.

The report, "The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean," quotes Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko as saying the region is "boiling like a cauldron" and is ripe for revolutionary effort.

The glossy, colorful 45-page booklet, produced by the Defense and State departments and sprinkled with charts, photographs and maps, is mainly "old wine in new bottles," designed for members of Congress to give constituents, a senior State Department official told a news briefing. He spoke on condition that he not be identified.

Nonetheless, the document stresses areas likely to be the administration's major talking points as it works to win congressional release of \$14 million for the Central Intelligence Agency to help antigovernment rebels in Nicaragua. The official said 25,000 copies have been printed at a cost of \$45,000.

Overall, the report said, "the Soviet Union sees in the region an excellent and low-cost opportunity to preoccupy the United States . . . thus gaining greater global freedom of action for the U.S.S.R."

For the first time since these position papers began appearing in 1981, this one charges the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua and "high-ranking Cuban officials" with narcotics trafficking and with using "money generated by narcotics to supply arms for guerrillas."

It features a photograph, released during recent congressional hearings, of two men handling an oblong black box-like object. The caption said the photo shows cocaine being loaded onto a U.S.-bound plane at a Nicaraguan airport by Federico Vaughn, a close aide to Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge.

Another U.S. official at the briefing said the cocaine was seized in the United States and was used as evidence in a Drug Enforcement Administration case against Vaughn.

The report said Gromyko's "boiling cauldron" remark came from notes recovered in the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada, which the official said were handwritten by one of three senior Grenadan officials during a meeting with Gromyko on April 15, 1983.

Gromyko was encouraging Grenadan Prime Minister Maurice Bishop's program of periodic seminars for "revolutionary groups in the Caribbean," the official said. "He says you must be very cautious so you don't get the imperialists angry, but you're doing the right thing . . . In effect he puts a Soviet stamp on this [seminar] project," the official said.

The report's central thesis is that in Nicaragua "the banner of Sandinismo is giving way to the reality of communism," and that Cuba and the Soviet Union are instrumental in the change.

Soviet-bloc military deliveries to Nicaragua have risen from 900 metric tons in 1981 to 18,000 metric tons last year, including six powerful Mi-24 HIND-D helicopter gunships, the report said. Nicaragua has 24 other helicopters, 340

tanks and armored vehicles—including 110 from the Soviet Union—and 70 long-range howitzers and rocket launchers for a military force of 62,000 active-duty members and 57,000 in the reserve and militia.

"Clearly, Nicaragua's military power threatens—and is not threatened by—its neighbors," the report said.

The blue-covered booklet went through numerous drafts and revisions over the past several months, one of which included more-fiery rhetoric and an introduction by Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger. The administration officials said the introduction was deleted to make plain that it was a joint effort of State and Defense.

"This is the first time that we have put together in one booklet information relating to . . . Soviet-Cuban support for the establishment of Marxist-Leninist regimes, the movement of hardware and political support," the official said. "If you believe some of this information, then maybe you will believe some of our contentions."